

GRAUSTARK

By...
GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

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go, sir," responded Quinnox.
"I'd like to know why there isn't I am just as guilty as Lorry."
"The duke charges the crime to but one of you. Baron Dangloss, will you read the warrant?"
The old chief read the decree of the princess slowly and impressively. It was as follows:

Jacot, duke of Mizrox, before his God and on his life, swears that Grenfall Lorry did foully, maliciously and designedly slay Lorenz, prince of Aphain, on the 20th day of October, in the year of our Lord 1889, and in the city of Edelweiss, Graustark. It is therefore my decree that Grenfall Lorry be declared murderer of Lorenz, prince of Aphain, until he be proved innocent, in which instance his accuser, Jacot, duke of Mizrox, shall forfeit his life, according to the law of this land providing penalty for false witness, and by which he himself has sworn to abide faithfully.

Signed,
YETIVE.

There was silence for some moments, broken by the dreary tones of the accused.
"What chance have I to prove my innocence?" he asked hopelessly.
"The same opportunity that he has to prove your guilt. The duke must, according to our law, prove you guilty beyond all doubt," spoke the young captain.

"When am I to be tried?"
"Here is my order from the princess," said Dangloss, glancing over the other paper. "It says that I am to confine you securely and to produce you before the tribunal on the 26th day of October."

"A week! That is a long time," said Lorry. "May I have permission to see the signature affixed to those papers?" Dangloss handed them to him. He glanced at the name he loved, written by the hand he had kissed, now signing away his life, perhaps. A mist came over his eyes, and a strange joy filled his soul. The hand that signed the name had trembled in doing so—had trembled pitifully. The heart had not guided the fingers. "I am your prisoner, Captain Dangloss. Do with me as you will," he said simply.

"I regret that I am obliged to place you in a cell, sir, and under guard. Believe me, I am sorry this happened. I am your friend," said the old man gloomily.

"And I?" cried Quinnox.
"But what is to become of me?" cried poor Angulsh, half in tears. "I won't leave you, Gren. It's an infernal outrage!"

"Be cool, Harry, and it will come out right. He has no proof, you know," said the other, wringing his friend's hand.

"But I'll have to stay here too. If I go outside these walls, I'll be killed like a dog," protested Harry.
"You are to have a guard of six men while you are in Edelweiss, Mr. Angulsh. Those are the instructions of the princess. I do not believe the accomplices—I mean the Aphain nobles—will molest you if you do not cross them. When you are ready to go to your hotel, I will accompany you."

Half an hour later Lorry was in a cell from which there could be no escape, while Angulsh was riding toward the hotel, surrounded by Graustark soldiers. He had sworn to his friend that he would unearth the murderer if it lay within the power of man. Captain Dangloss heard the oath and smiled sadly.

At the castle there were depression and relief, grief and joy. The royal family, the nobility, even the servants, soldiers and attendants, rejoiced in the stroke that had saved the princess from a fate worse than death. There were, of course, serious complications for the future, involving ugly conditions that were bound to force themselves upon the land. The dead man's father would demand the life of his murderer. If not Lorry, who?

In the privacy of her room the stricken princess collapsed from the effects



She sank back with a moan, fainting of the ordeal. Her poor brain had striven in vain to invent means by which she might save the man she loved. She had surrendered to the inevitable because there was justice in the claims of the inexorable duke and his vindictive friends. She signed the decree as if in a dream, a nightmare, with trembling hand and a broken heart.

His death warrant! And yet, like all others, she believed him guilty—guilty for her sake!

Mizrox and his friends departed in triumph, revenge written on every face. She walked blindly, numbly, to her room, assisted by her uncle, the count. Without observing her aunt or the Countess Dagmar, she staggered to the window and looked below. The Aphainians were crossing the parade ground jubilantly. Then came the clatter of a horse's hoof, and Captain Quinnox, with the fatal papers in his possession, galloped down the avenue. She clutched the curtains distractedly and, leaning far forward, cried from the open window:

"Quinnox! Quinnox! Come back! I forbid—I forbid! Destroy those papers, Quinnox!"

But Quinnox heard not the pitiful wail. Seeing him disappear down the avenue, she threw her hands to her head and sank back with a moan, fainting. Count Halfont caught her in his arms. It was nightfall before she was fully revived. The faithful young countess clung to her caressingly, lovingly, uttering words of consolation until long after the shades of night had dropped. They were alone in the princess' boudoir, seated together upon the divan, the tired head of the one resting wearily against the shoulder of the other. Wide and dark and troubled were the eyes of the ruler of Graustark.

An attendant appeared and announced the arrival of one of the American gentlemen, who insisted on seeing her royal highness. The card on the tray bore the name of Harry Angulsh. At once the princess was a-flutter with eagerness and excitement.

"Angulsh! Show him to this room quickly! Oh, Dagmar, he brings word from him! He comes from him! Why is he so slow? Ah, I cannot wait!"

Far from being slow, Angulsh was exceedingly swift in approaching the room to which he feared admittance might be denied.

"Tell me! What is it?" she cried as he stepped in the center of the room and glared at her.

"I don't care whether you like it, and it doesn't matter if you are a princess," he exploded, "there are a few things I'm going to say to you. First, I want to know what kind of a woman you are to throw into prison a man like—like—oh, it drives me crazy to think of it! I don't care if you are insulted. He's a friend of mine, and he is no more guilty than you are, and I want to know what you mean by ordering his arrest."

Her lips parted as if to speak, her face grew deathly pale, her fingers clutched the edge of the divan. She stared at him piteously, unable to move, to speak. Then the blue eyes filled with tears, a sob came to her lips, and her tortured heart made a last brave effort at defense.

"I—I—Mr. Angulsh, you wrong me—I—I—She tried to whisper through the closed throat and stiffened lips. Words failed her, but she pleaded with those wet, imploring eyes. His heart melted, his anger was swept away in a twinkling. He saw that he had wounded her most unjustly.

"You brute!" hissed the countess, with flashing, indignant eyes, throwing her arms about the princess and drawing her head to her breast.

"Forgive me," he cried, sinking to his knees before the princess, shame and contrition in his face. "I have been half mad this whole day, and I have thought harshly of you. I now see that you are suffering more intensely than I. I love Lorry, and that is my only excuse. He is being foully wronged, your highness, foully wronged."

"I deserve your contempt after all. Whether he be guilty or innocent, I should have refused to sign the decree. It is too late now. I have signed away something that is very dear to me—his life. You are his friend and mine. Can you tell me what he thinks of me—what he says—how he feels?" She asked the triple question breathlessly.

"He believes you were forced into the act, and said as much to me. As to how he feels, I can only ask how you would feel if you were in his place, innocent and yet almost sure of conviction. These friends of Aphain will resort to any subterfuge now that one of their number has staked his life. Mark my word, some one will deliberately swear that he saw Grenfall Lorry strike the blow, and that will be as villainous a lie as man ever told. What I am here for, your highness, is to ask if that decree cannot be withdrawn."

"Alas, it cannot! I would gladly order his release if I could, but you can see what that would mean to us—a war, Mr. Angulsh," she sighed miserably.

"But you will not see an innocent man condemned?" cried he, again indignant.

"I have only your statement for that, sir, if you will pardon me. I hope from the bottom of my heart that he did not murder the prince after being honorably challenged."

"He is no coward!" thundered Angulsh, startling both women with his vehemence. "I say I did not kill the prince, but I am not a coward. He would

have done so had they met this morning."

"He may be able to clear himself," suggested the countess nervously.

"And he may not; so there you have it. What chance have two Americans over here with everybody against us?"

"Stop! You shall not say that! He shall have full justice at any cost, and there is one here who is not against him!" cried the princess, with flashing eyes.

"I am aware that everybody admires him because he has done Graustark a service in ridding it of something obnoxious—a prospective husband. But that does not get him out of jail."

"You are unkind again," said the princess slowly. "I chose my husband, and you assume much when you intimate that I am glad because he was murdered."

"Do not be angry," cried the countess impatiently. "We all regret what has happened, and I, for one, hope that Mr. Lorry may escape from the tower and laugh forevermore at his pursuers. If he could only dig his way out!"

The princess shot a startled look toward the speaker as a new thought entered her wearied brain. A short, involuntary gasp told that it had lodged and would grow. She laughed at the idea of an escape from the tower, but as she laughed a tiny spot of red began to spread upon her cheek and her eyes glistened strangely.

Angulsh remained with them for half an hour. When he left the castle, it was with a more hopeful feeling in his breast. In the princess' bedchamber late that night two girls in loose silken gowns sat before a low fire and talked of something that caused the countess to tremble with excitement when first her pink cheeked sovereign mentioned it in confidence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FLIGHT AT MIDNIGHT.

LORRY'S cell was as comfortable as a cell could be made through the efforts of a kindly jailer and a sympathetic chief of police. It was not located in the dungeon, but high in the tower, a little rock bound room, with a single barred window far above the floor. There was a bed of iron, upon which had been placed a clean mattress, and there was a little chair. The next day after his arrest a comfortable armchair replaced the latter. A table, a lamp, some books, flowers, a bottle of wine and some fruit found their way to his lonely apartment, whoever may have sent them. Harry Angulsh was admitted to the cell during the afternoon.

He reported that most of the Aphain contingent was still in town. A portion had hurried home, carrying the news to the old prince, instructed by the aggressive Mizrox to fetch him forthwith to Edelweiss, where his august presence was necessary before the 26th. The princess, so Harry informed the prisoner, sent sincere expressions of sympathy and the hope that all would end well with him.

Late in the evening, as Lorry was lying on his bed, staring at the shadowy ceiling and puzzling his brain with most oppressive uncertainties, the rattle of keys in the lock announced the approach of visitors. The door swung open, and through the grate he saw Dangloss and Quinnox. The latter wore a long military rain coat and had just come in from a drenching downpour. Lorry's reverie had been so deep that he had not heard the thunder nor the howling of the winds. Springing to his feet, he advanced quickly to the grated door.

"Captain Quinnox brings a private message from the princess," said the chief, the words scarcely more than whispered. It was plain that the message was important and of a secret nature. Quinnox looked up and down the corridor and stairway before thrusting the tiny note through the bars. It was grasped eagerly, and trembling fingers broke the seal. Bending near the light, he read the lines, his vision blurred, his heart throbbing so fiercely that the blood seemed to be drowning out other sounds for all time, to come. In the dim corridor stood the two men, watching him with bated breath and guilty, quaking nerves.

"Oh!" gasped Lorry, kissing the missive.
[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Adam's Apple.

Three members of the Mug-House Club were discussing the recent disappearance of the Adam's apple in men's throats. In our younger days whenever a singing class or church choir was to be chosen the teacher or organizer would give the preference among the basses to men with long necks and big projections of the thyroid cartilage, while the tenors were selected from candidates with short, plump necks and no discernible apple. The plan does not seem to work nowadays. The apple is gone! At last, at last! That infamous little bite of forbidden fruit which stuck in Adam's throat has been swallowed. It could not have been a section of lemon. The outline was that of an eighth of an apple, and a hard one at that. Ever evidently at the other seven-eighths—and we still call him a better half! This may explain why a woman knows so much more than man about some things. [New York Press.]

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Fairbanks, of Indiana, and Shaw, of Iowa, were stumping Kentucky. After a successful meeting the Kentucky colonel who had the two Republican statesmen in charge invited them into the hotel bar-room for some refreshments.

"What'll you have?" he asked Senator Fairbanks.

"A little cold apollinaris," was the reply.

"And you?" said the host to Mr. Shaw.

"I think I will have a glass of buttermilk."

The barkeeper turned to the Kentucky colonel. "What shall I give you, colonel?" he asked.

The Kentucky gentleman heaved a long sigh. "Under the circumstances," he said, "I think you can give me a piece of pie." [Chicago Herald.]

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